

In a horse's company



Abderry Equine Services owner Cheski Brown and pupil in class.

The quality of Kiwi horses is internationally respected on the world stage. Our champion racehorses and sport horses have stunned the world for decades. But how has New Zealand been able to produce the equine champions that have taken on and beaten the world's best when we've been constrained, comparatively, on a shoestring budget?

The secret to our horses' quality comes from the very strong place horses have held and still do hold in many New Zealanders' lives. Whether these Kiwis own the next Melbourne Cup winner or "just a horse" their pride and joy carries their hopes and dreams and is a very, very, special surrogate child.

Abderry Equine Services has picked up on this distinction and is providing a new dimension to the field of equine education. Owner Cheski Brown has developed a "boarding school for horses". The school has departments catering for each stage of educational development ranging from kindergarten, pre-school, primary school and department of physical education, to a racehorse academy and sport horse college.

Cheski says what sets Abderry apart is its unique way of promoting horses as surrogate children and how horses, just like children, need firm, fair direction and as many opportunities as possible to perform to the best of their ability. "Our aim and mission is to allow the experience of being with horses to be safe and enormous fun, so that the horses and the people handling them have a better quality experience."

The boarding school concept has encouraged Cheski, as principal, to take on a team of equine counselors, coaches and tutors who teach their own specialist subjects. This

unique approach helps the school community to offer a more personal and focused service towards the horses and their humans.

"The school is now expanding to include "people" classes. Most owners want to be involved in the education of their horses and learn the simple A, B, C's of where, when and how to handle their horses safely. The education we give is not rocket science it's simply a question of thinking and being completely present in the communication between horse and human. We are committed to giving owners the lessons they need so that they can be safe, comfortable and relaxed in the company of a horse.

"It is very important that the humans associated with the horses' future also understand the thinking process involved within the education of the horse. There is little point sending your pride and joy off to finishing school if you do not have an understanding of the principles involved in the training. Not unlike loading a computer programme and then not knowing how to use it. Helping people safely enjoy handling horses is hugely gratifying and I get such a kick out of it," she enthuses.

"New horse people tend to rush in and get too up close and personal with a horse. They forget that horses are huge, sensitive and nervous creatures of flight that just want "out of there" when they're unsure. If you want to influence an insecure animal that is ten times bigger than you - you need to stand back so you can see what its thinking and which way it might want to go."

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Owner Cheski Brown (on right) Echo (the horse) and team.

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Ted Lindsay in Racehorse Academy.

NZI is proud to support Abderry Equine Service.
Congratulations to the team on 21 years of service.